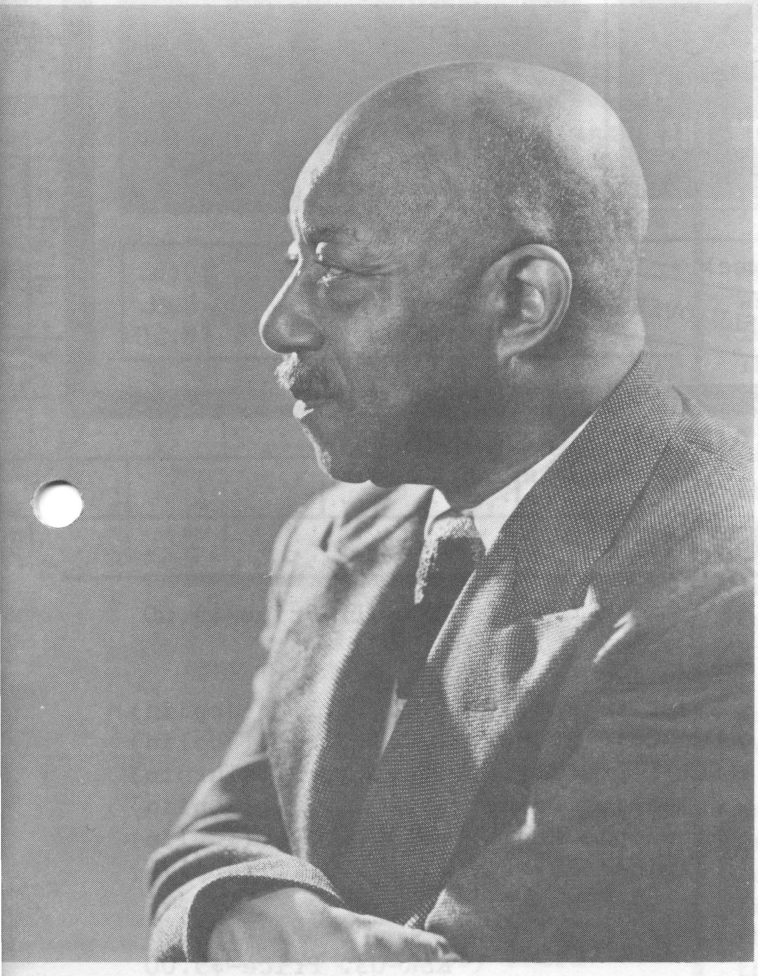
FOURTH ISSUE 1967

The Ragtimer

VOLUME 6 NUMBER 4

PRICE 75c



IN THIS ISSUE...

EDITORIAL	3
CENTENNIAL	4
SOUNDS FAMILIAR	6
MUSIC	8
FEATURE	11
RECORD REVIEW	13
SOMETHING DOING	15

PUBLISHED BY

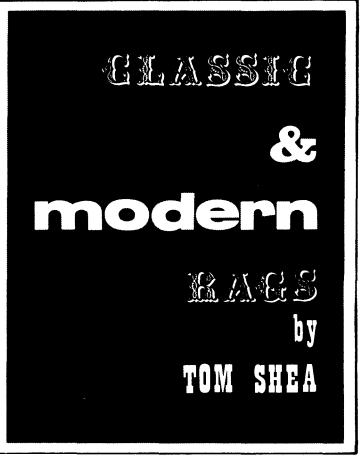
THE RAGTIME SOCIETY

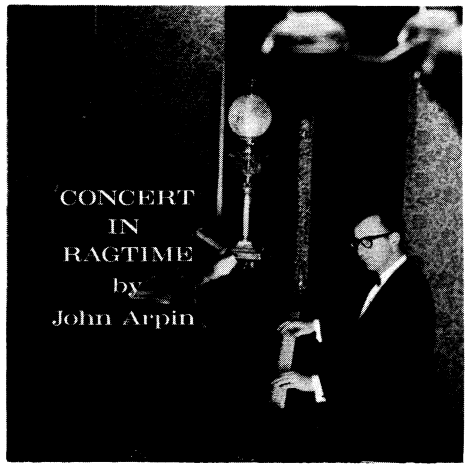
DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF CLASSIC RAGTIME

TWO, UP FRONT...

RAGTIME RECORD RECITAL

1910 **CONCERT HALL** 1910





Appearing for one week [illegible] onday Oct. 30th.
Evening perform [illegible] . 4th. 2.00 P.M.
Tickets now on [illegible] box office. $5.00 & $8.50

HELD OVER INDEFINITELY

"A SCINTILLATING RAGTIME PROGRAM" SAYS . . .

A. "RAGGITY" TYME

CLASSIC & MODERN RAGS.....TOM SHEA RSR-01. Price-$5.00

Side One
Spasm Rag.....(Shea)
Hasty Pudding.....(Shea)
Venial Sin.....(Shea)
Johnny Walker Rag.....(Shea)
Prairie Queen.....(Shea)
The Storyville Sport.....(Shea)
Black Mike's Curse.....(Shea)

Side Two
Stoptime Rag.....(Joplin)
Euphonic Sounds.....(Joplin)
St. Louis Rag.....(Turpin)
Something Doing.....(Joplin)
Pineapple Rag.....(Joplin)
Original Rags.....(Joplin)

CONCERT IN RAGTIME.....JOHN ARPIN RSR-03. Price-$5.00

Side One
Leola Two Step.....(Joplin)
Bethena - A Concert Waltz.....(Joplin)
Efficiency Rag.....(Scott)
Great Scott Rag.....(Scott)
Bird-Brain Rag.....(Lamb)
The Ragtime Nightingale.....(Lamb)

Side Two
Tickled to Death.....(Hunter)
Sleepy Hollow Rag.....(Woods)
Bill Bailey.....(Cannon)
Centennial Rag.....(Arpin)
Cannon Ball Blues.....(Morton)
King Porter Stomp.....(Morton)

COMBINATION OFFER!
Both of the above records, mailed to one address, for $8.50.

For information on other "Society" records available from stock, and postal rates for overseas orders, refer to THE RAGTIMER, Third Issue, page 8.

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY P.O. BOX 520 WESTON ONTARIO CANADA

RAGTIME...

UNDER YOUR HAT

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY

is a non-profit organization for people interested in Ragtime. Services include the publication of this magazine about all phases of classic Ragtime, the printing of sheet music, and maintenance of hard-to-find Ragtime books and records. We also record on our own label and associate label, bringing you performances of both old and new Ragtime.

Executive
Chairman : John Arpin
Treasurer : Idamay MacInnes
Secretary : John Fairhead

THE RAGTIMER

Editors John Arpin
John Fairhead

Contributing Editors
Roger Hankins
Thomas Shea

Editorial Advisory Board
John Arpin
John Fairhead
Idamay MacInnes
Thomas Shea

An important announcement must be made in this editorial concerning the increased cost of publishing THE RAGTIMER. As many of you know, our little magazine is subsidized by membership fees only. Other funds, such as profit made on records, go toward the production of new "Society" records. Funds received in Reprint Club subscriptions go toward the reproduction of unavailable ragtime works etc..etc.

This past year, membership in the Society remained at $3.00. We knew at this time last year that our change in format was going to cost more dollars, yet, keeping the cost the same gave you,-the member, an opportunity to assess the merits of the magazine. Considering the limited funds available, issuance of THE RAGTIMER has been sporadic. Holding the price at $3.00 has necessitated reallocation of funds which should have been used for other projects. Judging from the significant number of letters received endorsing the new format, the executive feels that the change was warranted.

In view of the above, it is necessary to increase the 1968 membership dues to $5.00. Since we are already into December, issues 5 & 6 will be covered in one mailout.

We are looking forward to your continuing support in 1968.

* * * * * * *

Many letters have been received by the Society from members suggesting that we broaden our scope to include Dixieland, Blues and other forms of traditional jazz. Their argument is that - with our more general acceptance of these other forms of music, devotees of the latter would be more inclined to reciprocate and take the Classic Ragtime element to heart. A few of these letters will be published in our next issue. We would certainly like to hear your viewpoint on this, so why not drop us a line!

THE RAGTIMER is published six times per year by THE RAGTIME SOCIETY, P.O. Box 520, Weston, Ontario, Canada, for its members. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission of THE RAGTIME SOCIETY is prohibited. Membership, $3.00 per year, includes all six issues for the current year.

CENTENNIAL?

BY BETTY REDELSHEIMER

In the not too distant past, our town of Kirkwood, Missouri, observed its centennial year by calling forth an organization of professional centennial celebrators, who proceded to mold the citizenry into something closely akin to a bad western movie set. As gender warranted, we bought long gingham dresses and bonnets, or top hats, string-ties and grew beards. (Would you believe that we buried"Mr. Razor" in the Argonne Parkway, which is Kirkwood's living memorial to its war dead from the Great War, and planted a psuedo tombstone there as testimony to the atrocity?)

While some of our townspeople spilled out like lemmings to volunteer for centennial committees, others of a more artistic nature auditioned for parts in the grand pageant, an extravaganza which was to depict the history of Kirkwood. Few thought it remarkable that our professional leaders, on such short acquaintance, were able to incorporate in the script the voyage of Marquette and Joliet (Kirkwood is twenty miles from the Mississippi River), the Civil War (we are 260 miles from Wilson's Creek), and World War 1 (you figure that one out). At any rate, the pageant was a sell-out for seven nights, culminating in a Coronation Ball and, you guessed it, the crowning of a Centennial Queen.

In joyous contrast, I was privileged to witness this year the centennial celebration of a great nation. I cannot, in all honesty, comment on the wonders of Expo, since I did not choose to go there. Nor will I dwell on the noticeably increased prices in restaurants, hotels and wool shops. As a capitalist, I could only appreciate the foresightedness of our Canadian brethren; as a free individual, I could have elected to stay at home.

What did impress me about Canada's birthday were the hundreds and thousands of people, who, so moved by pride in their country and a sense of their own worth to that country, undertook a centennial project. One wrote a song; another painted a picture; some planted flowers; a young boy used his savings to buy a new flag for the family's summer cottage.

What, you are asking, in the name of all that's holy, does this have to do with ragtime? Nothing, perhaps, and yet a good deal, for in 1968 we shall celebrate the hundredth anniversary of Scott Joplin's birth. It can be a variation of the Kirkwood theme, directed and misguided by those who care not one whit for ragtime. Or it can be something personal and unique; a celebration worthy of the man who knew that ragtime was a legitimate form of lasting music. In effect, we, who consider ourselves ragtimers, whether we be professional or amateur musicians or just plain appreciators and fans, have the opportunity to set the tone of this, the first ragtime centennial.

Perhaps some of the musicians among us will take as a Joplin Centennial Project the recording of an all-Joplin album. Maybe someone will write the Scott Joplin Rag. Hopefully, there will be some well-conceived and well-executed musical observances in cities like Toronto and St. Louis. On the grand scale it is rumored that at least one network television program will be devoted to the life and works of Joplin. Certainly our artists and poets and writers have their work cut out for them.

Where does this leave the poor, non-artist ragtimer? With plenty of missionary work on his hands, that's where. In short, take a friend to church. Unannounced, expose your friends to Augustan Club Waltzes or Ragtime Nightingale. (No letters to the editor, please. He knows that I know that the latter is not Joplin. The point is that it IS ragtime, and the discovery is a revelation without equal to the uninitiated). Whatever you do, don't push too hard or too fast. A little well-chosen rag in small doses can make an afficianado of your state representative or the choir director at church.

A note to the cynic: the latter is not make-work to insure that everyone feels wanted. Musicians, as you may have noted, need to eat as regularly as anyone else. They can't afford to play and record ragtime if only a handful are going to buy. The name of the game is still supply and demand, and it behooves those of us who want to hear ragtime to swell the demand. In stark terms (Will anyone believe that this was not an intentional pun?), without musicians ragtime would quickly become a dead language, lost to all but the dilettante.

Scott Joplin is still alive. The question is, are we?

(Betty Redelsheimer, who contributed the above article "Centennial", is one of our most avid Ragtime Society members. She flew up all the way from St. Louis to catch our Third Annual Society Bash and has also brought to us a number of new members. She has a fine flair for writing and her wonderful wit is revealed in this article. She hails from Kirkwood, Missouri and plays fine washboard. We are looking forward to more of the written word from Betty R. - Ed.)

REPRINT CLUB NEWS

The first five numbers in our new Chapter IV of the Reprint Club have just been mailed. The titles are:

(1) A BRAN DANCE SHUFFLE (A Ragtime Cakewalk) 1902 - WADE HARRISON.
(2) SLEEPY SIDNEY (Ragtime Two-Step) 1907 - ARCHIE SCHEU.
(3) NONSENSE RAG (A Ragged Sensation) 1911 - R.G. GRADY.
(4) THE ENTERTAINER'S RAG - 1912 - JAY ROBERTS.
(5) THE RAG PICKERS RAG (Two Step) 1904 - ROBT. J. O'BRIEN.

These works have a special significance. JOHNNY MADDOX, who was appearing recently in Toronto at the Golden Nugget, made the selections. Some of you, who will be fortunate enough to catch Johnny in his travels around the country, will be delighted to hear his version of "SLEEPY SIDNEY".

There has been wonderful response to this new chapter with twenty-two subscribers already enrolled. Keep 'em coming! With your support, the Reprint Club has become one of the most successful of 'Society' ventures.

Next mailout will consist of five more compositions, all dating from the 1890's. One surprise item will be from 1892.

Full information on the 'Reprint Club' and how it operates can be found in the Second Issue of THE RAGTIMER - pg. 5.

Keep Rolling Dem Rags!

SOUNDS FAMILIAR

ROGER HANKINS

FROM THE SCRAP HEAP

Not all of the interesting ragtime compositions can be classified as good music. This in no way implies that good music is ever uninteresting but rather that musical merit alone does not make a piece interesting. However it is generally true that the only redeeming feature of much of this inferior music is an early copyright date.

A composition of unusual interest but little merit was published by G.W.Setchell in Boston back in 1899. This is "Blackville Society Cake Walk" by the unknown Bernard Franklin who, as far as I know, never wrote another piece of ragtime music. This composition raises two questions: Where did Franklin get his material and why did he do such a bad job with such good material? The answer to both questions appears to be easy. Franklin must have heard others play this material, and then he copied their ideas to the best of his own limited ability.

The first theme of his cakewalk is remarkably similar to a passage from J.Russel Robinson's "Sapho Rag" written 10 years later, while the second theme is almost identical with four bars of Jelly Roll Morton's "Perfect Rag" (trio). This could be the result of coincidence, but the New Orleans flavor of both themes is undeniable. Sapho Rag is dedicated to a New Orleans resident and prompts the following line of thought.

Franklin took a trip to New Orleans where he visited some of the hot spots and observed some of the local pianists at work. Later when he tried to transfer his observations to paper he found that his memory was reliable but his technique was woefully inadequate.

A critical analysis of his technique is not entirely without interest but perhaps the matter of his memory should be explained away first. The assumption here is that his recollections were aided by the functional nature of the music he borrowed. Certainly the first 4 bars of Jelly's trio uses a standard progression which Franklin must have heard many times. Perhaps it was used as a warm up exercise by a certain house pianist or it may have been used as a rhythmic accompaniment similar to that used in "The Peanut Vendor". Robinson's theme, on the other hand, seems to be tailor made for closing out a performance, and perhaps Franklin heard it used when the House Pianist had run out of ideas and was coasting to a stop. I don't know if Robinson ever discussed Sapho Rag with anyone but this Riff theme of his seems to serve a functional purpose. The structure of Sapho, with X representing the Riff, is as follows: INTRO-A-B-X- INTRO-C-D-X. The only theme to be repeated is X and it brings each section to a close. Quite possibly this theme was one of many endings which became standard among the house pianists, and may have been favored by the particular pianist whom Bernard Franklin heard.

Franklin's technique could be dismissed easily with the assertion that he has none worth describing. Yet he does have a working knowledge of the essentials of ragtime writing. What he lacked was ease of expression which is just another way of saying that he had no feel for the music. He does the right thing at the wrong time, and in general has a negative approach where a positive one is required.

It is interesting to compare the first theme of "Blackville Society" with the passage from Sapho Rag. Franklin uses a waltz beat combined with a two step 1-2-3-1-2-3-1-2. This can be justified when we consider that James Scott used the same trick many times. (Hilarity, Paramount and Rag Sentimental). But Scott and Robinson made effective use of the right hand where Franklin placed the emphasis, perhaps unintentionally, on his little finger. His one note style may be excused since it was typical of the cake walk style in the late 90's, but then he uses full chords in the next theme, and his whole work becomes unbalanced. He injects a negative quality into the second ending of the 1st theme. The weak beat is heavier than the strong beat, not because the former is accented but because the strong beat is muffled. If he is guilty of understatement there, he balances the ledger by overstating the 7th bar of the 2nd theme. The stress marks here may be a printer's error, but most likely are written as intended.

Franklin was slow in catching on to an old negro trick, the sliding technique, as witness the first bar of the second theme. The melody note on the 4th beat is 'C' but common usage would dictate 'A sharp' as in the final strain of 'Kismet Rag'. Of course he might have deliberately ignored this smooth progression on the assumption that a bouncing melodic line was more raggy. Even granting the use of 'C' on the 4th beat, his left hand still should suggest the progression as in the 4th beat of Joplin's 'Cascades'. To put it mildly, the 2nd theme of 'Blackville Society' is a monumental flop and becomes more than that when compared with Jelly's classic treatment in the trio of "Perfect Rag". And even here Jelly wasn't trying to say anything. He was just trying to set the stage for some perfect variations in his final theme.

It would be nice to say that Franklin's third theme was similar to 'High Society' and helped suggest the title for his piece. But, failing that, the third theme does supply material for a bad joke. It might have been another functional melody, a sort of theme song of any of the various houses which gave employment to the better piano players. Though it may have sounded like "Twinkle, Twinkle little star" to Bernard Franklin, it is better known today under a new title composed in 1927. This could be another instance where old New Orleans was way ahead of its time. The new title for this melody is "Bless this House".

R.C.Hankins - Boston

NOTE: Since the above article by Mr. Hankins deals with a single composition, and because the score is rather difficult to obtain,-we have reproduced "Blackville Society" by Bernard Franklin on the following three pages.-Ed.

BLACKVILLE SOCIETY CAKE WALK

AND TWO STEP.

To be effective, must not be played too fast.

INTROD:

BERNARD FRANKLIN.

Copyright MDCCCXCIX by G. W. Setchell. Copyright for all Countries.

2
ff
8
mf
mp
8
mf
mp
8
8
mf
mp
8
mf
mp
f
mp
ff
TRIO
mf

f
mp
f
1
2
8
ff
8
8
8
1
2

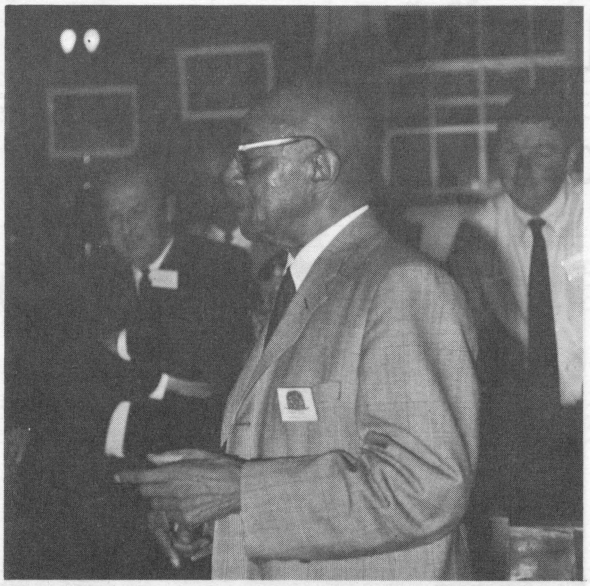
The Third Annual Ragtime Society 'Bash'

EUBIE & MARION BLAKE, our guests of honor!

Distinguished guest RUDI BLESH with member JEAN CUFF.

TREBOR & JEANETTE TICHENOR of St. Louis talk ragtime with DON WOODEN of Baltimore.

IDAMAY MACINNES with KEN VINEN-our brave host.



EDY ANTON of St. Louis & JACK CUFF, master of ceremonies listen to the Charleston Rag.

A lesson from the master!

'THE PROFESSOR' unravels a rag!

IDAMAY MACINNES, JOHN ARPIN & JOHN FAIRHEAD - our lighthearted executive.

A very successful party! How about making a point of seeing us next year!

RECORD REVIEW

RCA VICTOR'S VINTAGE SERIES

RCA Victor is in a unique position for establishing a re-issue series of Lp records. The company dates back practically to the earliest days of commercial recordings and it has been successful enough since that time 1) to justify using the best available sound techniques and
2) to take a chance on recording just about any style of music that has come along. Moreover, it has remained continuously in business, so its files and masters are in good shape.

For some reason, Victor had been lagging behind some of the other companies in starting a re-issue program, but it has recently more than made up for the delay by producing its magnificent Vintage Series. So far, about fifty of these Lps have been released, numbered consecutively from LPV-501 to LPV

LPV-501 to about LPV-550, In general, each one contains about sixteen tracks, opr about fifty minutes of music. Musical value is the only criterion for inclusion, but even so, some of the tracks have never previously been released. Much of the older material has been re-mastered so that the fidelity is the best one can hope for from music recorded before the days of hi-fi. (Just about everything in the Vintage Series was electrically recorded in the first place, so the fidelity was not that bad to start off with). Each record has thorough liner notes by someone who knows and cares about the subject of the Lp.

The material covers the whole field of non-classical music. There's folk music and country blues (Woody Guthrie and Leadbelly, for example), dance bands (Isham Jones, Coon-Sanders), jug bands, pop records from the twenties, and just about everything else. No Lp yet has been entirely devoted to ragtime, but much of the series has been devoted to jazz; some of these jazz Lps are of interest to ragophiles because they contain piano solos by Fats Waller and Jelly Roll Morton, two of the master ragtimers whose biographies are outlined in "They All Played Ragtime".

Waller so far has been represented by 516 "Fats Waller '34/'35", 525 - "Valentine Stomp" and 537 - "Fractious Fingering". Piano solos are as follows: 516 - "Blue Black Bottom". "Numb Fumblin'", "Goin' About";
525 - "Valentine Stomp", "I've Got A Feeling I'm Falling", "Love Or Or Leave Me";
537 - "Gladyse", "My Feelin's Are Hurt", "Sweet Savannah Sue". Waller was an absolute master of keyboard technique and dynamics, as these selections repeatedly prove. In fact, his skill was such that he is one of a handful of jazzmen from the twenties and thirties whose work is still admired by other jazzmen of virtually every style, including the most modern.

The rest of the tracks on the Wallers are band performances. There are one or two big-band tracks and a few small band instrumentals, but most of the material consists of Waller playing and singing with his small group that made so many records for Victor in the thirties. These sides may not interest ragtimers, although Waller was an excellent band pianist and takes piano solos on almost all tracks as well. Moreover, no one with a spark of humor can fail to enjoy Waller's delightful vocals and casual side remarks.

Morton recorded few piano solos for Victor, and one of the two Morton Lps, 508 " Stomps And Joys", consists entirely of band (including trio and quartet) recordings, plus two blues accompaniments. The other, 524 "Hot Jazz, Pop Jazz, Hokum And Hilarity", contains two solo tracks, Takes 1 and 2 of "Freakish". As with Waller, however, Morton was a fine band pianist and there is much good jazz piano on these two records.

Both pianists are represented on 543 "Classic Jazz Piano Styles" an Lp consisting entirely of piano solos (plus two duets between boogie-woogie pianists Albert Ammons and Pete Johnson). Morton plays "Freakish" (Take 1 - one of the rare examples of a track that appears on two Lps in the Vintage Series), "Fat Frances" and "Pep". Waller does "Handful Of Keys", "E-Flat Blues", Tea For Two" and "Russian Fantasy".

For the sake of completeness, it should be mentioned that prior to beginning the Vintage Series, Victor had released some Lps of material by Waller and Morton, some of which are now rather hard to find. Among the other records devote to Waller are RCA Victor LPM-1246 "Ain't Misbehavin'" (piano solos on "Honeysuckle Rose", Ain't Misbehavin'" and "Tea For Two"), LPM-1502 "Handfull Of Keys" (Ring Dem Bells", "Handful Of Keys"), LPM-1503 "One Never Knows Do One?" ("Carolina Shout", "Georgia On My Mind"), and RCA Camden CAL-473 "The Real Fats Waller" ("Carolina Shout"). The Morton Lp, LPM-1649 "The King Of New Orleans Jazz", contains no piano solos, but much of the Lp is made up of tracks from the recordings Morton made with his Red Hot Peppers for Victor in 1926-1927 and which have been called, by some critics, the best recorded examples of the New Orleans ensemble style.

For those ragtimers who have never heard Waller or Morton, neither plays in the St. Louis style which is probably most familiar to Society members. The New York (Waller) and New Orleans (Morton) ragtime styles are much closer to jazz than the St. Louis style. Nevertheless, if you have wanted to have one Lp by either of these two pianists in your collection, you could hardly do better than by getting one of these Vintage Series Lps. In fact, that goes for just about any style of music which is covered by the Vintage Series.

Vintage Series Lps are still coming out, at the rate of one or two every month or so, and they are well worth watching. There will probably be more Waller, possibly more Morton, and maybe something of direct interest to persons who just like ragtime, but not jazz. In any event, the overall quality of this series is so high that if (or perhaps I should say when) Victor decides that they have run their course and takes them off the market they will almost certainly become highly prized collectors' items. In the meantime, though, these Lps are easy to get; they can be ordered from any record store in the United States and probably can be obtained elsewhere without too much difficulty or delay.

Tex Wyndham

FOOTNOTE:

Since this article was written, Victor has released LPV-546, 'Mr. Jelly Lord", by Jelly Roll Morton. Like the other Morton Lps, it is excellent, but it contains no piano solos. - T.W. -

SOMETHING DOING...

DON BURNS - appearing at the Holiday Inn, Delaware Ave., Buffalo, N.Y.

DON EWELL & WILLIE 'THE LION' SMITH - appearing at the Colonial Tavern for two weeks, December 11 - December 23 in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

JOHNNY MADDOX - appearing at the Cherry Creek Inn, Denver, Colorado from November 27 - January 6.

MAX MORATH - frequently on Arthur Godfrey's morning show.

RAGTIME DOLLAR BILL - appearing at the Ramada Inn, Casper, Wyoming from December 2 - January 13.

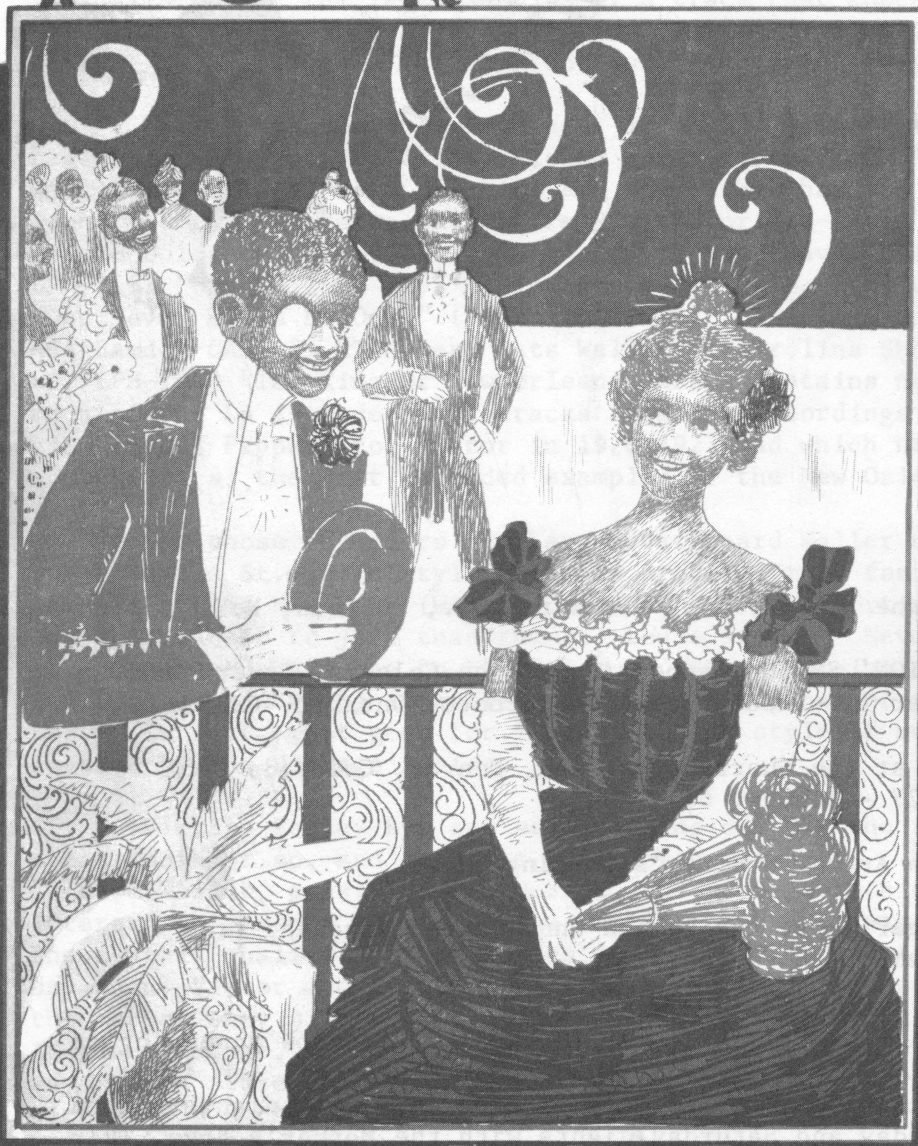
CHARLIE RASCH -
TOM SHEA -
MOTHER'S BOYS -
BOLL WEEVILS -
KERRY PRICE -
SISTER KATE ROTH -
plus visiting artists -

all the artists listed to the left are now appearing at LULU'S STORYVILLE SALOON, 109 S. Main St., Ann Arbor, Michigan. Kerry Price will sing some week nights and on Friday and Saturday nights with the Mother's Boys. This is very welcome news and we hope that you folks in that particular area will patronize this establishment.

TREBOR TICHENOR and THE ST. LOUIS RAGTIMERS - appearing at the Goldenrod Showboat in St. Louis, Missouri.

Come on, performers, how about telling us where you're going to be the next few months. This is your page!

BLACKVILLE SOCIETY



CAKE-WALK TWO-STEP

BY
BERNARD
FRANKLIN

5

BOSTON
G.W.SETCHELL
PUBLISHER